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CONDITIONAL

IMMORTALITY

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CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY.

By the Rev Wm. McLaren D. D., Professor of Systematic Theology, Knox College, Toronto.

THERE are few topics of importance upon which the Christian Church has spoken with greater decision than on the eternity of future punishments. In all its leading sections, it has taught that those dying in their sins shall endure unending penal sufferings, varying in degree, according to the measure of their personal ill-desert. In all its branches, Latin and Greek, Lutheran and Reformed, Calvinistic and Arminian, it has uttered one voice. This unanimity cannot be regarded as due to the unthinking reception of a dogma handed down from the past. The interests involved are too momentous, and come too closely home to every heart, to admit of such an explanation. It is, moreover, certain that the leading views now embraced by those who reject the eternity of future punishments, were presented to the Church, before the close of the third century, by authors of sufficient reputation to secure for their sentiments careful attention. Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and a few others, taught the final restoration of all free agents to holiness and the favor of God. And Arnobius, a little later, maintained the annihilation of the wicked. This distinguished convert from heathenism was a disciple of Lucretius, and he appears to have brought his master's materialistic philosophy with him into the Christian

church. But while both these views were so early set forth with ability, the faith of the Church remained unchanged.

In our own day, marked attention has been directed to the final destiny of the wicked. The immemorial doctrine of the Church has been assailed from opposite sides, by Restorationists and Annihilationists, with a vehemence of assertion which their mutually contradictory interpretations of scripture do not seem to abate. We purpose examining the views of those who hold the annihilation of the wicked, or, as they generally prefer to call it, the doctrine of Conditional Immortality.

This doctrine assumes various phases. Some maintain that the souls of the wicked cease to exist at death, and that no resurrection awaits those who die out of Christ. This view, however, contradicts so clearly what the scriptures teach respecting the punishment of sin, the state of the soul after death, and the resurrection of the body, that the number who embrace it is comparatively small. It may in some respects be more consistent with the views generally enunciated by Annihilationists, than that which they more commonly accept, but its antagonism to scripture is so obvious, that few seem prepared to avow their belief in it. The more ordinary form of the doctrine, to which we shall confine our attention, is that embraced by such writers as the Rev. Edward White, Samuel Minton, and Henry Constable, in England, and C. F. Hudson and others, in America. These writers, while differing from each other on minor matters, agree on maintaining the following positions, viz.:

1st. That the death threatened to man in Eden, on account of sin, is the extinction of his being. When man dies he ceases to exist. They suppose that his entire being was naturally mortal, but might have become immortal by obedience, and the consequent participation of the tree of life.

2nd. That the righteous are through the incarnation and the work of Christ, rendered immortal. Hence they speak of CONDI-

TIONAL IMMORTALITY, by which they mean that eternal existence, in the case of man, is CONDITIONED on his union to Christ. All who reject Christ, or come short of an interest in him, are blotted out of existence.

3rd. That there shall be a general resurrection and judgment of the whole human race, and the wicked, having been raised up, shall have inflicted on them such punishment as will issue in their annihilation, or in the final extinction of their being. Some suppose that this issue will likely occur immediately after the general judgment, and others that it will be reached only after a period of sufferings, protracted, it may be, for "ages of ages."

The importance of this discussion is apparent at the first glance, and a careful study of the relation which one part of the system of truth sustains to another, deepens our sense of its vital nature. Edward White repudiates the notion that the agitation, which he is aiding, deals merely with the "simple question of the retribution of sin." "It is a movement," he says, "for the reconstruction of anthropology and theology from one end to the other."—Vide Report of Conference, page 31.

In this discussion we shall appeal, not to philosophy, but to Divine Revelation. There can be no doubt, however, that the doctrine of "Conditional Immortality" is linked so closely in the minds of its advocates, with a peculiar philosophy of human nature, that they seem unable to read the Scriptures, save through the glass which their philosophy supplies.

There are two views of human nature, radically distinct, on which the Scriptures cast some light, and which cannot but influence the manner in which we regard the points raised in this discussion.

The common view of mankind, and of the Christian church, is that two distinct substances, mind and matter, or soul and body, are united in man. And while the personality resides in the higher

nature, which we speak of as the soul or spirit, the properties of each nature are predicated of the person, so that we recognize them as peculiarly our own. If this view of the nature of man is correct, physical death may be nothing but the result of the separation of soul and body. And the dissolution of the body, consequent upon this separation, supplies no presumption that the soul, which consciousness reveals as one and indivisible, is subject either to decay or dissolution.

The second view is that presented by Materialism, which ignores or denies the distinction between mind and matter. This philosophy regards the soul as a function of the body, and views thought as the product of highly organized matter. Those who embrace this system necessarily believe that when the body is dissolved by death, the soul ceases to exist. The elements, which combined make up the organism called man, are at death separated, and enter into new combinations, and go to make up other organisms.

Adam was as much non-existent after his death as before his creation. The elements out of which he was formed alone remained. White and Hudson avoid committing themselves definitely to Materialism, but the drift of their statements and reasonings is unmistakeable. Hudson speaks of "the prevalence of a materialistic philosophy which has frequently attended the doctrine which we maintain," and he states it as his opinion, "that speculative Materialism is not to be for itself condemned."—Debt and Grace, pages 243, 246. But this Materialistic view of man's nature, even where it is not openly avowed, underlies the doctrine of "Conditional Immortality," and rules the interpretations of Scripture given by its advocates.

In this paper, passing over matters of subsidiary importance, I shall confine attention to one or two central points, on which the whole discussion chiefly turns. The controversy hinges largely upon the meaning which the advocates of Conditional Immortality

attach to DEATH, as threatened in Eden, and spoken of in scripture generally as the penalty of sin. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,"—Genesis ii. 17. Rev. Samuel Minton, who speaks with some degree of authority for Annihilationists, says: "Most of us would be willing to stake our whole case on the natural and prima facie meanings of the words Life and Death, Immortality and Destruction. These and their cognates are the key words of the controversy."—Report of Conference, page 14. We have no objection to the issue thus raised, provided all the evidence bearing upon it is fairly examined, and the confident assertions of Annihilationists are not substituted for proofs. According to the common judgment of christendom, the THREATENING included death temporal, spiritual and eternal, or to state the matter in another way, death is penal evil inflicted, according to the righteous measure of the Great Judge, upon man's complex nature. According to Annihilationists, man who came from the dust returns, at death, to dust. He is resolved, as one of their writers has it, "into his elemental atoms." Minton assures us that "Adam must have understood the death penalty to mean the entire deprivation of being."—Report of Conference, page 12. Another writes, "The first man is out of the earth, and the final destiny of man, as a man and a sinner, is to return unto the earth, and to become as though he had not been." —Quest. of Ages, page 135. White intimates that Adam learned the meaning of the threatening from his observation of death among the lower animals, and he informs us that at death "the animals, as individual beings, utterly and wholly cease to be."—Life in Christ, page 23.

The question which we have to decide is whether, when the Scriptures speak of death as the penalty of sin, or when they use the word in its ordinary and primary sense in reference to man, they mean "his entire deprivation of being";—whether, when they speak of him as dead, they mean that he "has utterly and wholly

ceased to be". How then shall we determine the meaning of the threatening in Genesis ii. 17? The natural way would seem to be to examine the record in which the threatening occurs, and to ascertain what light is thus thrown upon it; and then seek to discover the manner in which the Scriptures elsewhere employ the word DEATH, and its correlative LIFE. This course does not seem to commend itself to the advocates of Conditional Immortality.

They suggest various ways of determining the force of the threatening, which labor under the serious infirmity of assuming as certain what requires to be proved, and what sometimes, moreover, admits of no proof.

White assures us, and Constable agrees with him, that Adam must have understood the word Death, as he was accustomed to employ it, "in his short use of language in relation to the animal system around him"—page 112. In other words, he must have understood death to be the same to a rational and moral being that it is to irrational creatures. And as White affirms that at death animals "as individual beings, utterly and wholly cease to be,"—page 23—death to man must be the extinction of his being. This reasoning implies: 1st. That Adam, before he received this threatening, had witnessed death among the lower animals, which is quite uncertain. 2nd. That what he knew of the import of the threatening was gathered from the words recorded in Genesis, and from what he had observed in the animal system around him, which is also quite uncertain; and 3rd, That Adam knew that death is the termination of existence to the lower animals. If he knew this, he had learned what Bishop Butler, long after, had not discovered. That profound thinker, in his Analogy, writes: "Nor can we find any thing throughout the whole analogy of Nature to afford us even the slightest presumption that animals ever lose their living powers, much less, if it were possible, that they lose them by death, for we have no faculties wherewith to trace any beyond, or through it, so

as to see what becomes of them."—Page 17. If Adam knew that the lower animals cease to exist at death, he knew what no process of observation could teach him, and which we ourselves do not know, unless it be through revelation made long subsequent to the time of Adam. And if he had a revelation, of which there is no record, to teach him that the beasts cease to exist at death, may he not have had a revelation of an opposite kind in reference to himself and his posterity? If he was informed that the spirit of the beast goeth downward, may he not at the same time have been taught that the spirit of man goeth upward? Ecclesiastes iii., 21.

So far as observation goes, what takes place, when a good man and when a beast dies, is the same. All signs of life and activity disappear, and physical decay sets in. If this prove that the brutes cease to exist, it proves the same in reference to good men; yet Annihilationists, like White and Hudson, maintain that good men, in virtue of their union to Christ, do not entirely cease to be at death. And if it must be admitted that what is observed proves nothing in regard to the continued existence, or non-existence of men or of beasts, it is only candid to say so. We are reminded, however, that there are reasons why death does not end the being of those who are in Christ, which do not apply to the lower animals. We reply (1), that these reasons could not be learned from observation of what transpires in the animal system around us, and (2), that there are reasons in the very constitution of man as a moral, intelligent and responsible free agent, which bespeak for the race an endless existence, reasons which cannot be supposed in the case of the lower animals.

This mode of determining the meaning of the threatening ignores the important distinction between man and the lower animals recognized in the record of creation, and assumes that Adam learned from observation what no observation could teach.

But White and Constable support their views of the threatening by an assumption, which they probably mistake for reasoning, viz: that Adam must have understood the threatening to mean the extinction of his being for ever, or death in its primary meaning, as he had learned it from the animal system around him, otherwise it would have been unjust in God to inflict the penalty. This is begging the question, and something worse. What requires to be proved is, that death in the primary and ordinary sense of the word is the cessation of existence. This we have seen could not have been learned from observation. And if a revelation was necessary to make Adam know that the penalty threatened is "the entire deprivation of being," what but a tacit assumption of what requires to be proved, prevents these writers from perceiving that the same method of instruction was equally suited to inform him that death is to be understood in the pregnant sense, required in many parts of Scripture, and even by the narrative in Genesis.

But we deny absolutely that a penalty must be known, or understood, before it can be justly inflicted. The justice of the punishment depends on the law being known, and on the penalty being proportioned to the offence, but not on the penalty being known. Constable, replying to Professor Bartlett on this point, says: "If this Professor of Theology had consulted a Professor of Jurisprudence, he would have been informed, that when a man is incapable of knowing the nature of a penalty, he cannot be subjected to it." —Nat. and Dur. of Future Punishment, page 30. This is an artful representation, by which one thing is adroitly substituted for another, in a way not very worthy of an honest man. Human law views a man, who from mental imbecility or disease, is incapable of understanding the law or its penalty, as not responsible for his actions. But this has nothing to do with the case on hand, where the law was known and understood, and only the penalty is supposed to have been not fully comprehended.

According to the teaching of White and Constable, where God forbids a sin, and does not publish a penalty, no penalty can be inflicted. Were this precious morality accepted, the members of a community, which had the Decalogue revealed from Heaven as their moral code, might deem themselves licensed, so far as exemption from penalty could license them, to murder, steal, and commit adultery, because the precepts forbidding these sins have no penalties attached to them. White tells us that even the "Chinese government considers itself obliged to read to the people periodically the Criminal Code."—Page 113. If so, it may be assumed that it has wisdom to do it, to make them familiar with the law, rather than merely to acquaint them with the penalty. We think it is manifest that neither of these modes of determining the meaning of the threatening given in Eden can satisfy any thoughtful and unbiased mind.

We shall now advance a step, and give some reasons why we cannot accept the view of death on which the doctrine of Conditional Immortality is based. We reject the doctrine.

1. Because it is based on an unfounded assumption, viz: that the primary and ordinary meaning of death is the cessation of existence, or the extinction of being. This notion pervades the reasonings of Annihilationists, and it is essential to the theory that this should be recognized as the primary meaning of the word. For only in this way can they hope to fasten such a meaning on death, as the threatened penalty of sin. We venture, however, to assert that it is a pure assumption, in support of which not one relevant fact can be adduced, and in opposition to which almost numberless facts array themselves.

Constable, with his usual boldness, claims the testimony of the dictionaries of all languages to the assertion. "that the primary and ordinary meaning of death is the extinction of being." He writes: "Every dictionary of every language of the earth is our witness of

this."—Page 75. It is difficult to imagine a statement more unfounded, made by an intelligent man, who considers himself under obligations to speak the truth.

The word "DEATH" has, no doubt, a primary, and various secondary meanings, but it is not true that, in any language with which we are acquainted, or in any respectable dictionary,, its primary meaning is the extinction of being, or that the word primarily implies that the being who has died has "utterly and wholly ceased to be." It is a word which points primarily to certain familiar physical phenomena, which occur once in the history of every man, but it gives no explanation of the causes or results of these phenomena. The Imperial dictionary gives as the meaning of the word death: "The state of a being, animal or vegetable, but more particularly of an animal, in which there is a total and permanent cessation of all the vital functions, when the organs have not only ceased to act, but have lost the susceptibility of renewed action." In this definition, there is nothing inconsistent with the continued existence of the soul after death. Of course, if Materialism is true, the cessation of these vital functions in the disorganised material mechanism, carries with it the extinction of mental and spiritual action, and of the soul itself, which is merely a function of the body. The entire man is resolved into his "elemental atoms," and ceases to be. But this conclusion is not reached from the primary force of the word DEATH, but from the teachings of a base philosophy. And even if Materialism were proved true, it would not follow that mankind, in speaking of an occurrence so familiar as death, has any thought of pronouncing it true. Sunrise and sunset are due to the revolution of the earth on its axis, but neither the learned nor the unlearned, in using these words, ever dream that they are enunciating that truth. Bishop Butler has well remarked: "We do not know at all what death is in itself, but only some of its effects, such as the dissolution of the flesh, skin and bones. And

these effects do in no wise appear to imply the destruction of a living agent."—Analogy, page 16. If our vital functions are due to the union of the soul and body, then their total and permanent cessation in the body, which is the thing observed in death, may be due to the termination of that union, and does not imply the extinction of the soul, or that it has ceased to be active or conscious. It is only when the teaching of a Materialistic philosophy is adroitly transfused into the word DEATH, that it can be made to speak the language of Annihilationism.

If Constable's reckless assertions were true, whenever a man says a neighbor has died, he intends to affirm that he has "utterly and wholly ceased to be." The prevalence, well nigh universal, of a belief in the immortality of the soul, is a sufficient refutation of this preposterous assertion. The truth is that neither Materialists nor Annihilationists have ever been sufficiently numerous to mould the language of any people. Neither Hebrews, Greeks nor Romans, when they spoke of the death of their friends, in the ordinary and primary sense of that word, ever dreamed of asserting that the departed had ceased to be ; and with the exception of a few who had become corrupted by a Materialistic philosophy, they did not believe it. It is notorious that the Jews, in the time of our Lord, with the exception of the Sadducees, who never were a numerous class, believed in the immortality of the soul. Of this the New Testament and Josephus supply ample evidence. And if we can trust poets, philosophers and historians, it is no less certain that the mass of the Greeks and Romans did the same. Their superstitions make this belief palpable. Their Gods were nearly all departed heroes. Tartarus and the underworld were peopled with those who had laid aside the body in death. Necromancy, which prevailed extensively, is a recognition of the survival of souls separated from the body. And if the popular religion provided for the departed a ferryman at the river, and judges for the nether world, it surely is

sufficient evidence that when they spoke of death in its primary sense, they did not intend to affirm that the dead had "utterly and wholly ceased to be."

Another point requires to be noticed in connection with this word. What Annihilationists assert is the primary meaning of death is a purely SECONDARY MEANING, of which there are occasional examples in classic, and even in theological Greek. But it is only the perverting influence of a Materialistic philosophy, which in view of the facts we have adduced, could ever lead any one to mistake it for the primary sense of the word. Like nearly all our terms, which represent abstract ideas, the word DEATH passes from what falls under the senses to what, in a higher department, is supposed to be analogous. Between those familiar sensible phenomena, which the word primarily represents, analogies are easily traced in a higher region, out of which spring secondary meanings of the word death. To illustrate; When a living creature dies, the body is dissolved into its elements. Following this analogy, a writer may affirm or deny the death of the soul, when he wishes to assert or repudiate the notion of its continued existence. In the one case, he designs to affirm that the soul cannot or will not be resolved into simpler elements, and thus pass away; while in the other he makes the opposite assertion. But this is a purely secondary meaning of the word, which became necessary, when men began to indulge in abstract speculations. Again, when a living creature dies, physical decay sets in, and putrefaction, with all its loathsome accompaniments, follows. Pursuing this analogy, death when applied to the soul, represents the decay of moral principle or character, and all the loathsomeness of a depraved heart and life; in one word, moral and spiritual death. But this is not more certainly a secondary meaning of the word death than the other.

But we might very well object to have the biblical sense of the word death determined by an appeal to its usage in heathen writers, or indeed in extra scriptural writersof any kind. The only safe way to reach the meaning of the word in the Bible, is to examine carefully the passages in which it occurs. Supernatural revelation had to engraft an entirely new circle of ideas upon languages which had been before employed merely as the vehicle of heathen thought. It was therefore often compelled, as the context shows, to use words in a much higher sense than that in which they were employed among the heathen. To insist that the usage of classic Greek is to rule the interpretation of the New Testament is really to keep Christianity down to the dead level of heathen ideas. What, we may say, was Paul's entire speech on Mars' Hill, but an attempt to engraft on the word GOD a circle of ideas, as much higher than that which the Athenians connected with it, as the God of the Bible is higher and purer than those monsters of vice, whom the heathen often honored as their Deities?

II. We cannot regard the death threatened as equivalent to the cessation of being, because that view does not agree with the intimations of the record in Genesis, respecting the nature of man and the execution of the penalty. There are four things in the record which we require to observe:

1st. That the creation of man is introduced with much greater solemnity than that of the lower animals. His creation is not referred to merely as that of a member of the animal kingdom, with powers and capacities somewhat higher than those of his fellows, but as that of a being largely SUI GENERIS, an animal no doubt, but one quite unique in his nature. When the lower animals are introduced, God said, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly, the moving creature that hath life," or "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind."—Genesis i. 20 and 24. The language looks as if their origin were wholly earthly, but when we come to the crea-

tion of man, the Godhead is represented as taking counsel. "And God said, let us make man," &c. This is language, surely, which might prepare us to look for a being of a very different nature from the other denizens of earth. This expectation is fulfilled; for the record next asserts,—

2nd. That man was created in the image of God. We are often reminded, by those who regard man as entirely of earthly origin, that in Genesis ii. 7, God is said to have formed man out of the dust of the ground; but it should not be forgotten that there are two accounts of man's creation given in Genesis i. 26, 27, and ii. 7 —the later supplying some details omitted by the earlier—but what is stated first, as announcing that which is most distinctive of man, and that in reference to which the Godhead takes counsel, is that man was made in the image of God. In what, then, does the image of God consist? The scriptures warrant us in answering, that it consists in two things, distinct, yet related. (1) A likeness of nature to God, which was not lost by the fall—Genesis ix. 9, James iii. 9, and 1st Cor. xi. 7. And (2) a likeness in moral character to God, which was lost by sin, and may be restored by grace. Paul tells us to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,"—Ephesians iv. 24. And again he describes Christians as those who "have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him,"—Col. iii. 10, and 2nd Cor. iii. 18. These passages teach, (1), That the new man, which we put on, when we become living followers of Christ, is the re-establishment of the divine image, in which man was originally created. (2) That the distinguishing features of that image are knowledge, righteousness and holiness, or moral excellcellence viewed from its intellectual and ethical sides. (3). That these features of the Divine image were created in man. If we ask ourselves, in what do such qualities as knowledge, righteousness and holiness inhere? The answer must be, in man's spiritual na-

ture. or in that element of the Divine image which sin has not obliterated.

God is a spirit, and when He made man in His image, He made him a spirit. It is from CONSCIOUSNESS we get the idea of spirit as something distinct from matter. Through the senses, we come to the knowledge of matter, as found in the body and in the external world. It is recognized as that which has certain properties, such as extension, weight, color and divisibility. By consciousness I become acquainted with something which I call myself, or my soul, which thinks, feels, wills, makes moral discriminations, and is one and indivisible. None of the known properties of matter can be ascribed to the soul or self, as made known by consciousness. And none of the known properties of the soul can be predicated of matter. We thus reach a knowledge of soul or spirit as essentially distinct from matter. When everything which discovers to us the existence of soul and of matter, reveals them as distinct, it would surely be gratuitous folly to attempt to identify them with each other. But while we can predicate none of the properties of the self or soul of matter, we are constrained both by reason and revelation to ascribe to God, in infinite measure, all the distinguishing properties of the soul, and to deny to him all the properties of matter. To Him we ascribe personality, feeling, intelligence, will, moral character, and indivisible unity—the very characteristics of the human soul revealed by consciousness. And when we affirm that human soul is spirit, and that God is a spirit, we only employ a verbal symbol to express what we had before discovered is common to man and to his Creator. If we had not discovered through consciousness what spirit is, the assertion, that God is a spirit, would mean as little to us as a description of colors to a man born blind, or of sound to a man who has been always deaf. Language cannot convey simple ideas which are not already in the mind. A belief, therefore, in the spirituality of the human soul, and in the spirituality of God, logically stand or fall together.

But it may be asked, what is the connection between the spirituality of the soul and its survival after death? The attitude of both friends and foes is good evidence that the connection is real. Nor is the reason far to seek. Were the soul material, or the result of highly organized matter, we would naturally expect that when the body returned to dust, the soul would vanish and become as though it had not been. But if the soul is spirit, a substance which is essentially diverse from matter, if it is not liable to decay or dissolution, and if consciousness reveals it as one and indivisible, then the changes which dissolve the body into its elements, cannot affect the soul. No doubt God can blot the soul of man out of existence, although the fact that He made it in His image may be regarded as an intimation of an opposite intention, but we cannot suppose even the Almighty to divide it, or to resolve it, into simpler elements. In the very structure of the soul, therefore, which was made in the image of God, we discern the fore-gleams of immortality.

3rd. The record of man's creation indicates very clearly the DUALITY of his nature. "And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."—Genesis ii. 7.

The force of the argument here does not depend on the statement that man became a living soul—NEPHESH HAYAH—terms which are expressly applied to the lower animals, but rather upon the indication which we have here of a twofold nature in man, one part drawn from the dust, and the other the product of the in-breathing of the Almighty. The place which man is here recognized as holding in the animal kingdom, is due to the union of soul and body. Bring together all the elements of man's nature which are drawn from the ground, and arrange them in the exact order in which they are found in living men, and let the Spirit be a wanting, and man is not NEPHESH HAYAH, a living soul, or animal; he

is a carcase or corpse. But add to what comes from the dust what is due to the inbreathing of God, and he becomes a living soul, a creature having life, and takes his place in the animal kingdom. No fair handling of the record can keep out of view the indications which it gives of a twofold nature in man. It distinguishes between the vital principle, or soul, and the material organism, and points to the former as more directly from God, and "akin to Him than the latter." And the inference deduced from the marks of dualism apparent on the record of man's creation, becomes more powerful when the record is read in the light of the inspired comment, given in Ecclesiastes xii. 7, "Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it;" and still more clear, as practically interpreted by the prayer of the dying Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."—Acts vii. 59.

4th. But the record in Genesis gives not only indications of the nature of man, but also of the execution of the curse threatened; from which it appears that the penalty fell more directly on the soul. Disobedience was to be followed by immediate punishment: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The narrative shows that the first fruit of sin was reaped in the souls of our first parents. The sense of shame, the dread of God's displeasure, and a consciousness of a baleful change in their relations to God, are the things which are first experienced by the transgressors. It is not the extinction of being, but of conscious well being, which appears. Is this no intimation to us of the real meaning of the threatening? We are informed by Annihilationists that but for the intervention of Christ, the cessation of being would have followed man's sin instantly. This, however, is a pure assumption, to which the Scriptures give no countenance. It is never safe to regulate our views of Scripture by unproved assumptions. What we here observe is penal evils, which are spoken of elsewhere in Scripture as death, coming upon our first parents as soon as they sinned,

and these we regard as included in the threatening. This is God's interpretation of his own words.

III. We cannot accept the Annihilationist view of death, because the scriptures show that the soul of man retains a conscious existence after death.

Those who embrace the doctrine of Conditional Immortality with which we are dealing, while insisting that death means primarily the extinction of being, admit that as a result of the intervention of Christ, men do not cease to be until after the general judgment. White says, "The Hades state is for good and bad, one of the miraculous results of a new probation."—Page 106. But writers of this class uniformly deny, and in order to give their admission a semblance of consistency with their view of death, it is necessary that they should deny to man a conscious existence between death and the resurrection. We cannot regard the consistency as real. They appear, however, to think that if they assign to man a condition so near to non-existence, that it may be mistaken for it, it will be forgotten that they have defined death to be "the entire deprivation of being." Do the scriptures, then, warrant us in ascribing to man, between death and the resurrection, an unconscious state? Turn to that evangelical narrative in Luke xvi, 19-31, which Annihilationists always speak of as a parable. Its doctrinal value will, however, in no way be lessened, if we view it as a parable; for a parable always presents a case which might have happened. You will observe that the passage asserts three things, viz.: (1.) That Lazarus and the rich man died. What the scriptures recognize as death in its primary and obvious sense, befel both of them. (2.) Both passed, at once, into a state of conscious existence, the one comforted in Abraham's bosom, and the other lifting up his eyes in Hades, being in torments. (3.) That this was their condition during the lifetime of the five brethren of the rich

man, whose advent he dreaded, or in other words, during the very period elapsing between his death and the resurrection.

This one passage subverts the entire scheme of Annihilationists. But it does not stand alone. The dying malefactor was comforted with the assurance that he should be that day with Christ in paradise.—Luke xxiii. 43. Paul expected, when his earthly tabernacle was dissolved, to be received, in his abiding personality, into an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and when he was absent from the body to be present with the Lord.—2nd Corinthians v. 1-8. We learn, also, that the Apostle of the Gentiles deemed it far better to depart, and be with Christ, then to remain in the flesh. To him death was gain, not a state of unconsciousness. Moses, who had been many centuries dead, appeared in glory along with Elias, and talked with Christ concerning the decease which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem.—Luke ix. 30, 31. This certainly is something very unlike slumbering on in unconsciousness until the resurrection.

The Sadducean doctrine was based on the same materialistic philosophy which we have seen underlies the theory of Conditional Immortality. And Christ in refuting the denial of the resurrection by the former, refutes also the denial of consciousness to those who have died, as held by the latter. Our Lord met the cavils of the Sadducees by showing that the words addressed to Moses at the bush, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," implied that these patriarchs were still living, and in covenant relations with God. What Annihilationists inform us is a state of entire unconsciousness, He pronounces to be a state of life. "For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him."—Luke xx. 38. The testimony of Christ, therefore, is explicit that death, in the ordinary sense of that word, does not exclude the continued life of the soul apart from the body.

IV. We reject the Annihilationist view of the threatening in Eden, because it is not in harmony with the New Testament usage of the words LIFE and DEATH, particularly when they are associated with the mission of Christ. He is represented as coming to deliver us from death, and to impart to us life; and it will not be questioned that the death from which He frees us is the curse entailed by sin, and the life He bestows is the opposite. That life, in the New Testament, is used to signify not merely conscious existence, but man's NORMAL EXISTENCE, a blessed life in fellowship with God, where all the fruits of His favor are enjoyed, is, we think, undeniable. Death, on the other hand, frequently stands for the opposite, AN ABNORMAL EXISTENCE OF ALIENATION FROM GOD, subject to all the penal evils which follow such an existence in this world and in the world to come.

When Christ says, "Let the dead bury their dead," Matt. viii. 22 it needs surely no proof that the dead who were capable of burying their dead, were not persons who had either laid aside the body, or who had ceased to be, but men who by reason of their abnormal state of alienation from God, were viewed as spiritually dead. It is equally apparent that it is in the same sense the word is applied to the church in Sardis, which had a name to live, and was dead,—Revelations iii. 1. John affirms, "he that loveth not his brother abideth in death," but he does not mean to say either that his earthly career was over, or that he had ceased to exist. The Apostle Paul expressly declares that "to be carnally minded is death,"—Romans viii. 6—and the reason which he gives for the assertion is not that it leads on, at some future time, to "the entire deprivation of being," but that it involves alienation of heart and life from God; for in the next verse he adds, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." This is what Paul regards as death. He even predicates death and life of the same person, at the same time,—"she that

liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth,"—1st Tim. 5, 6. That life is spoken of as imparted, in a sense exactly corresponding, is sufficiently evident from the statement, "To be spiritually minded is life and peace,"—Romans viii. 6; or from the declaration, "You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins,"—Ephesians ii. 1.

It is important to observe that in many of the passages in the New Testament, where LIFE denotes a normal state of being in the fellowship, likeness, and enjoyment of God, it is directly associated with the mission of Christ, and the imparting of life, in this high sense, is set forth as the special object of His work. A few illustrations must suffice. John xvii. 23: "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou has given Him. And this is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent." Observe here (1) That the end for which Christ was granted all power was that He might give eternal life to as many as were given Him. This life must be the opposite of the death which was introduced by sin. For Christ "came to destroy the works of the devil."—1st John iii. 8, and 1st John iv. 9. (2) That this life, in what Christ regards as its most essential aspect, is to know the only true God, and His Son, Jesus Christ. The life which our Redeemer came to impart, as defined by Himself, is not mere conscious being, but a normal state of being in communion with God, whose real glory is spiritually apprehended. It is to know God, and His Son, Jesus Christ.

John iii. 36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Observe here, (1) everlasting life is the present possession of the believer. He hath it. The present tense is used. It is not something bestowed merely at the resurrection. (2) The unbeliever shall not see life. If life here means a normal existence in the fellowship and enjoyment of God, the statement is

intelligible, but if it means mere existence. or conscious being, the assertion palpably contradicts facts. It may be imagined that, at some future period, the unbeliever shall cease to be, but that he now exists is as certain as any fact to which our senses bear witness. (3) But the nature of the death in which the unbeliever abides, and out of which he shall not pass, is explained by the last clause of the verse, "But the wrath of God abideth on him." He is in other words, subject to such penal evil as the divine displeasure may inflict. The death which is here implied is not the extinction of being, but an abnormal state of being, where man, estranged from God, abides under his frown. According to the Annihilationist interpretation of the various clauses of this verse, the whole may be fairly paraphrased, as follows: He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting conscious existence, he that believeth not the Son shall not see conscious existence, but the wrath of God abideth on that which has "utterly and wholly ceased to be"!!! A theory which reduces such a text to nonsense is not of God.

The usage of the words life and death, to which we have adverted, pervades the New Testament, vide John v. 24; John vi. 47-51; Rom. vii. 9-13; Rom. vii. 24-15; Rom. viii. 6; Eph. ii. 1-6; Eph. iv. 18-19; Col. ii. 12-13; 1st John iii. 14.

V. We cannot accept the Annihilationists' view of the death threatened in Eden, because they do not themselves adhere to it, and cannot adhere to it, without coming into direct conflict with what they acknowledge to be the teaching of Scripture.

Those who embrace the phase of the doctrine of Conditional Immortality with which we are dealing, maintain (1) that the death threatened in Eden, and death in the primary and obvious sense of the word, are one and the same; and both imply the extinction of being. Those who have died have "utterly and wholly ceased to be." (2) That there shall be a resurrection of the entire race, and a general Judgment, where the wicked shall have such punishment inflicted on them, as will issue in their final annihilation.

It must be evident to any one who reflects that these positions are mutually destructive. We turn to Gen. v. 5, and we read, "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died." This is certainly death in its plain and obvious, in its primary sense. Then, of course, according to Mr. White, he "utterly and wholly ceased to be." He was, as another writer has it, resolved into his "elemental atoms." These existed before he was created, and they exist after he is dead, but, if death is the cessation of being, in no other sense did Adam exist after he died, than he existed before his creation. And, as "it has been appointed unto men once to die," it follows that all who have passed away from this earthly scene, have ceased to be: "they have returned to the earth, and have become as though they had not been."

But what has ceased to be cannot be raised up again. The rain drops of this year are not a resurrection of the rain drops of last year. The sounds which issue from the tolling bell to-day are no resurrection of the tones which came from it yesterday. A resurrection implies continuity of being. If Adam ceased to be, when he died, he cannot be raised up again. Another man may be created in his likeness, but the original Adam is gone for ever. When a great teacher, to whom Annihilationists pay some respect, would establish the resurrection of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and of the dead generally, he did so by proving that these patriarchs continued to live long after they were, in the primary sense of the word, dead. Math. xxii. 23-32. He knew that a creation is one thing, and a resurrection another.

But when we press Annihilationists with the consideration that, if death is the extinction of being, a resurrection is impossible, they meet us with the statement that, owing to the remedial system introduced by Christ, none of the human race will be annihilated, until after the General Judgment. White says "Hence there will be a resurrection of the unjust to give an account of the deeds done in the body; and in order to permit of the reconstitution of the

identical transgressor, we hold that his spirit is preserved in its individuality from dissipation in the death of the man, to be conjoined again to the body at the day of Judgment." Life in Christ P. 130. Hudson informs us that "the soul is an entity not destroyed by the death of the body, however dependent it may be on embodiment for the purposes of active existence." Debt and Grace. P. 261.

This no doubt secures continuity of being, and renders a resurrection possible. But what becomes of death as the cessation of existence? What has befallen the primary meaning of death, the plain and obvious meaning, the meaning to which all dictionaries of all the languages in the world bear witness? What has become of that meaning which Adam gathered from observation of the animal system around him? It has surely been resolved into its elemental atoms, and has "become as though it had not been"!! The possibility of a resurrection is preserved, but it is by renouncing what we have been told, with wearisome reiteration, is the plain and obvious meaning of death, as the extinction of being.

It turns out that, although the Bible says Adam died, he is not dead. Abraham did not die. The rich man did not die, before he lifted up his eyes in Hades, being in torments. Lazarus did not die, before angels carried him to Abraham's bosom. And Jesus Christ did not die on Calvary. For not one of these, "utterly and wholly ceased to be."

Nay, we must go farther. we are forced to accept two remarkable generalizations, viz., (1) that from the beginning of the world down to our own day, not one human being has died, in the plain and obvious, in the primary sense of the word, and not one human being shall die, until after the General Judgment, and (2) that while the Bible speaks familiarly, on almost every page, of death, in what mankind regard as its ordinary and primary meaning, in no single instance, when speaking of man, does it use the word, Annihilationists themselves being witness, in the sense which they

assign to it in the threatening in Eden!! We are asked to believe that what the Bible everywhere calls death is in reality not death, in its plain and obvious meaning; and this too by men who insist that we must always follow the simple and primary meaning of the word!

The doctrine of Conditional Immortality is an attempt to unite incompatible elements, and the result is that the theory will harmonize neither with the Scriptures, nor with itself. If the annihilationist retains his definition of death, he must abandon, like the ancient Sadducees, the hope of a resurrection. And, if he retains the Christian hope of a resurrection, he must forsake his Sadducean view of death, as the cessation of being. The doctrine is self destructive. For, if the dead have ceased to be, they cannot be raised up, and if they have not ceased to be, then, according to Annihilationists, they are not dead.

The time which we may occupy with one lecture, will not permit us to touch on many points raised in connection with the discussion of Conditional Immortality. Nor can I suppose it necessary. Those who have followed the discussion, must have seen that the points we have handled are so central that the whole question turns upon them; and that if the positions we have taken have been sustained, the doctrine of Conditional Immortality cannot be regarded as either true, or Scriptural. Our discussion has turned on the question whether death, as threatened in Eden, and spoken of throughout the Scriptures as the penalty of sin, is the extinction of being. After testing the methods by which it has been attempted to fasten this sense upon the threatening, and discovering their fallacious character, we have seen good cause to reject the annihilationist view of death. (a) Because it is based on an unfounded assumption, viz., that the primary and obvious sense of death is the cessation of existence. We have seen that this notion of death is not due to the primary force of the word, but to a materialistic philosophy, and that neither Hebrews, Greeks nor Romans, when

they spoke of those who had died, ever dreamed of asserting that they had ceased to be. (b) We have seen reason to reject this view of death, because it does not agree with the intimations in the record of the creation and fall, respecting the nature of man and the execution of the penalty. We have seen that when God made man, the record shows that he made him in his image: he gave him a spiritual nature like his own, a nature beyond the reach of the causes which produce decay and dissolution in the body, and fitted from its very character for an endless existence. The record also shows that man's being was twofold, the lower portion drawn from the dust, and the higher which bore the divine image, due to the inbreathing of the Almighty, and that it was the union of these two which constituted man a living soul, or a living creature. We have seen also that when the penalty fell on man, its first effects were seen in his higher nature, and the penalty, read in the light of the record, is not the extinction of being, but of conscious well-being.

(c) We have seen reason to reject the Annihilationist view of death, because the Scriptures teach that the soul retains a conscious existence after death. The existence of an unconscious entity will not meet the facts. A state of conscious happiness, or misery is required.

(d) We have seen that the view upon which we have been adverting, is not in harmony with the New Testament usage of the words LIFE and DEATH, particularly when they are associated with the mission of Christ. We have seen ample evidence that life signifies, not merely conscious existence, but man's NORMAL EXISTENCE, a blessed life in fellowship with God, where all the fruits of his favour are enjoyed, and DEATH stands for the opposite, an ABNORMAL EXISTENCE OF ALIENATION from God, subject to all the penal evils, which such alienation entails here, or hereafter. And we have seen that this is the life Christ declares he came to impart, and the death from which he delivers us.

(e) We have seen that the doctrine of Conditional Immortality is self destructive, and that we are compelled either to abandon the hope of a resurrection, or to renounce the assumption that death is the extinction of being. It is surely quite unnecessary to pursue any of the other converging lines of Scriptural evidence which go to show that Conditional Immortality has no foundation in the Word of God.

We are, however, frequently reminded, as if it were decisive of the whole question, that the Scriptures assert that "God only hath immortality." But those who urge this argument, should remember two things, viz., (1) that when these words are taken without restriction, they exclude Conditional Immortality, as truly as a natural immortality, bestowed by God on the entire race at creation, and continued to them in accordance with his unchanging purpose, and (2) when the words are taken with the Scriptural limitation, which would make them consistent with the doctrine of Conditional Immortality, they are equally in harmony with the ordinary doctrine of the Christian Church. All they teach is the unquestionable, but most important fact, that God has immortality IN AND OF HIMSELF. His is underived and independent, while that of the creature is derived and dependent. God's being, his wisdom, his holiness and all his perfections, belong to him in a way that nothing can possibly belong to the creature. Ex. iii. 14, Rom. xvi. 27, Rev. xv. 4 and 1st Tim. vi. 16. And from the beginning, the Christian Church has been careful to ascribe no immortality to man which is not derived from God, and dependent on his sustaining power.

We are also sometimes asked. whether it is not an abuse of language to force such words as "destroy" and "perish" to mean endless conscious misery. Those who remember that Christ came to save the LOST (Gr. destroyed) will not allow this question to shut them up to annihilation. Those who ask it, probably do not mean to impose on their readers. Through mental confusion, they

have only imposed on themselves. They do not perceive that two things may be inseparable, and quite consistent with each other, which are nevertheless not convertible. Light and heat are inseparable in a sun-beam, but it would be an abuse of language to make light mean heat. Sin and misery are inseparable in this world and in the next, yet it would be an abuse of language to make sin mean misery. And so, while the words "destroy and "perish," may not be terms convertible with endless conscious misery, they may be perfectly consistent with it, if the destruction referred to is of that which renders existence godlike, noble, useful, and desirable.

But those who teach that the wicked shall be annihilated through sufferings, which may be protracted for "ages of ages," should not forget that it is equally an abuse of language to make the words "perish" and "destroy" mean conscious misery for "ages of ages."

I cannot conclude, without expressing the conviction that the doctrine of Conditional Immortality degrades the entire conception of Christianity, to an extent that few who have embraced it, understand fully. If the penalty threatened on account of sin is the extinction of being, the life which Christ bestows is the opposite. It is the imparting to men endless conscious existence. Only this, and nothing more. Holiness of heart and life, cannot enter into the end. It may be a means to the end, or a condition, without which the end cannot be secured, but the end is mere conscious existence. When we open our New Testaments, we read that believers were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that they should be holy. (Eph. i. 4.) We are told that our Redeemer is called Jesus, not because he saves his people from extinction of being, but because he saves them from their sins. (Matt. i. 21.) We are informed that he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (Tit. ii. 14.) We are assured that Christ loved the

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Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it. (Eph. v. 25-26.) If there is one fact respecting redemption, which stands forth more prominently in the New Testament than another, it is that the grand end which Christ had in view, in subordination to the glory of God, was the holiness of his people, their complete restoration to the moral and spiritual image of God. But now we are asked to believe, that the grand end was that men might be preserved in existence. And to this holiness itself must be subordinated. This is a revolution and a degradation. The man who values a painting, not for the touches of the artist's skill and genius, which have made it instinct with thought and character, but for the square yards of its surface, has done in art, what will be effected for Christianity, when for that holiness of heart and life, which is the grand end of Christ's redeeming work, men shall learn to substitute the conscious existence of Conditional Immortality.